

From: fidvo ovdif
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 2:49pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a professional computer programmer and hobbyist, I was shocked to hear about the grossly insufficient proposed settlement in the Microsoft Antitrust case. The proposed settlement only puts a few restrictions on Microsoft which will do nothing to encourage competition.

The danger of a monopoly in the computer industry is compatibility. Software must be compatible with hardware. Programs must be compatible with the operating system. I use Windows at home, not because it's the best operating system, but because all of the programs I run are compatible with and only with Windows. Any settlement that encourages competition must at the very least address this issue. If there were ten different operating systems on which I could run my programs, there would be competition, and Microsoft could not use its monopoly unfairly. I do not necessarily mean that Microsoft should be broken up. If they were forced to publish all of their API's (Advanced Programming Interface- the code that links the programs to the Operating System) without copyright or patent, with a clause barring Microsoft from litigation against those who use these API's to develop competing operating systems, this would be sufficient. It would allow third parties to develop !
operating systems that would run the same programs, thus encouraging competition. Microsoft would then be forced to compete on the merit of its product, which is what true competition is about.

Once again, I consider this to be the bare minimum, without even addressing the numerous other issues. Any settlement that does not at least do this much is a statement that the Microsoft is more important than the law or the free market.

Sincerely,

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